REVIVALS

ir Place and their Power

JOHNSON

Class 269. *Book* J.62.

University of Chicago Library

GIVEN BY

Besides the main topic this book also treats of

Subject No.	*On page*	*Subject No.*	*On page*

REVIVALS:

THEIR PLACE AND THEIR POWER,

BY

REV. HERRICK JOHNSON, D. D.

THIRD EDITION.

CHICAGO.

F. H. REVELL, 148 AND 150 MADISON STREET,

Publisher of Evangelical Literature.

3V 3799
J01 .9

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1882, by
F. H. REVELL,
In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

69639.

REVIVALS.

I. INTRODUCTORY.

That a prejudice, and, in some cases, a very decided prejudice, exists, even amongst good Christian men, against what are termed "revivals of religion," cannot be denied. Ministers of the Gospel will sometimes express themselves as if they regarded revivals as abnormal and undesirable conditions of church life. They will speak disparagingly of them as questionable agencies of growth; as attended with varied, serious and inevitable evils; as spurts of enthusiasm born of excitement; as begetting an emotional and spasmodic, instead of a principled and stable piety. They will tell you that the true and healthful life of the church is one of steady growth; that the accessions from the world should be constant; that God's people should always be revived.

Their position is strongly fortified by the large measure of truth that supports it. Unquestionably very serious evils have attended many of these seasons of special religious interest; evils so manifestly pernicious as to challenge the thoughtful attention of the church, and to justify resolute measures for their repression and eradication. Just as unquestionably the people of God ought to live at a much

higher level of spiritual life than is reached by the mass of them in ordinary and actual experience.

But with both these points freely conceded, we think it can still be made clear to demonstration that revivals of religion have their legitimate place as an important means of Christian nurture and conquest, that they are, therefore, not only not to be condemned and avoided, but to be counted among the things for which every pastor and every church should labor and pray.

Let us first define our terms and clearly understand what is meant by the phrase "religious revival."

II. REVIVALS DEFINED.

They are seasons of special interest and activity in religion, just as revivals of business are seasons of increased activity and profit in business. Strictly, revivals can be predicated only of God's people—those who have once known the life of God, and who by God's spirit are now *re-vived.* They are the quickening and the stirring to intenser manifestations, graces and activities that have already had place in their life. Conversions from the impenitent world are rather the fruits of revivals in the church, and constitute what might more properly be termed awakenings. But by accepted and general usage the term "revival" is made to cover both the quick-

ened spiritual interest and activity of Christians and the the turning to God of the hitherto impenitent.

III. VINDICATION OF REVIVALS.

1. FROM HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE.

Revivals have marked the history of God's people throughout the whole period of God's dealing with them. They have blazed a path through all the centuries. The Scriptures themselves testify to this point. Under the good king Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxx, the people were summoned to the House of God at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover. Some laughed the invitation to scorn; but many humbled themselves and came up to Jerusalem and kept the sacred feast seven days. And when these were ended the people had so good a time that they took counsel together to keep other seven days, and they kept seven days more with gladness; and there was great joy in Jerusalem, the like of which had not been known since the time of Solomon. It was a genuine protracted meeting, as true a revival of religion as was ever known. Again and again did Israel in her history thus take on new life. And the church in that upper room, praying for the Holy Spirit in mighty power (Acts, i, 14), and the baptism that came there on the day of Pentecost (Acts, ii, 1–4), was another Scriptural revival.

And that wonderful work at Ephesus, when Paul

held a meeting for prayer and conference every day for upward of "two years," and "mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts, xix, 8–20)—that was one of the grandest revivals on record, "all they that dwelt in Asia," hearing the word of the Lord Jesus.

Ever since there have been times, at frequently recurring intervals, of special manifestations of the mighty power of God in the outpouring of His Spirit. No history of the church, no history of any evangelical portion of the church could be written without conspicuous mention of these marked seasons of grace. To deny that they have been of God is to fly in the face of the most abundant and convincing testimony, both human and divine. To admit that God has signally and mightily worked in and through these agencies, thus setting His seal on them, is to admit their vindication. Indeed, the divine agency is inseparable from revival. There can be no genuine revival without it, so that he who speaks in indiscriminate and sweeping opposition, is really challenging the ways of the Almighty, and would best take care lest he be found fighting against God.

2. FROM THE NECESSITIES OF HUMAN NATURE.

Revivals correspond to the promptings and necessities of human nature, and are founded in reason as well as experience. 'That absorbed and almost exclu-

sive attention to religious matters which is not only possible but justifiable at certain periods, would not be possible constantly, at all periods. The relations of society and the necessities of secular life are such as to make unavoidable demands upon time and strength. Often these demands are particularly pressing, and to meet them is as clearly a duty as to pray. The discharge of such duties, however, compels withdrawal from that absorbed attention to duties directly spiritual, to which Christians are, at intervals, able to give themselves. Take this in connection with the limitations of our physical nature, making it impossible to endure for a long while the nervous strain and draft of constant and intense spiritual interest and unwonted toil, such as is common to seasons of marked religious fervor, and we have a vindication of revivals laid in the very nature of things. Labor here, as everywhere else, may be redoubled and intensified on special occasions for special results, but it cannot be *kept* at that tension without prematurely killing the laborer.

This argument gets confirmation in that law of nature by which we have seed-time and harvest. "One soweth and another reapeth," is Christ's own application of this law to the spiritual world. Sowing is not reaping. Seed requires time for germination and growth. We may labor and other men may enter into the fruit of our labor.

Let me say nothing to lessen by one iota any effort for, and expectation of, *immediate and constant fruit.* I would repeat and emphasize the words of the Master, "Say not ye there are yet four months and then cometh harvest? Behold, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." Let us be always thrusting in the sickle. Let us cultivate the habit of believing that on any week of the round year, we may gather sheaves for the Kingdom of Heaven. We know there are two reapers, that never cease their reaping—Satan and Death. The steady swing of their sickles never stops. With them the harvest is always *ripe*, always *now*. So should it be with us as reapers for God.

But while this is true, it is equally true that the preacher is a sower going forth to sow; that some seeds never come to quick maturity; that much that is sown germinates and bears fruit only after a plenteous rain of righteousness. There are special harvest seasons in the spiritual world as in the natural world—times of great ingathering, when as round about Ephesus, mightily grows the Word of God and prevails.

3. FROM THEIR EFFECTS ON THE CHURCH AND THE MINISTRY.

Revivals deepen the spirituality of the church and the ministry. Churches drop their feuds, Christians shake off their dead weights of formality and

worldliness, and get experiences of God's grace they never wholly lose. Ministers grow used to direct, pungent, personal preaching, and learn in their dealings with the human heart, more of its evasions and shifts and lying refuges and its possible avenues of approach, and become wiser in winning souls, in one season of revival work than in a whole decade of ordinary ministry. This, of course, applies only to revivals of the Divine sort, born of the Spirit and the Truth.

4. FROM THE CHARACTER OF CONVERSIONS IN REVIVALS.

Persons born to God in seasons of revival, are, as a rule, more active and constant and consecrated than those coming into the church at other times. This is contrary, perhaps, to a somewhat prevalent impression, but it has been the testimony of many of the best and wisest ministers of the church. Wesley affirmed it; Edwards affirmed it; and it is the unquestionable truth. Look at the facts in confirmation. Take the pillars that have stood so long in the churches throughout New York State, the goodly and godly men who have for scores of years let their light shine, and it would probably be a surprise to many, to find how large a proportion of them were the fruits of revivals, and what numbers date their new life from the mighty awakenings under Charles G. Finney.

There are two all-sufficient reasons why it should be, that converts in revivals are the best the church receives.

(*a*) They hear the plainest, simplest, most practical, most searching truths of God, bearing immediately on the way of salvation, day by day. The way is made clear. They know what it is to come to Christ. They are made familiar with the elementary truths. They are therefore less likely to be deceived, and they can give a reason—a clear, intelligent reason—for the hope that is in them. In my experience as pastor, covering years of ordinary accessions to the church and several years of accessions by precious revivals, I have found that intelligent views of the truth and proofs of discipleship and subsequent stability and activity were much more prevalent in the latter class than in the former.

(*b*) They become immediately active as Christians, and at once begin to exercise their gifts, both in testifying of the Grace of God and in seeking to bring others to Christ. Thus they form habits of service and devotion by which they are developed and made robust and stalwart in Christian character.

Now neither of these points is so likely to be true of those who come quietly into the church in times of no special religious interest. Their hearts are

not so searched by the truth, line upon line, and they are not so likely to be put to active service. There is neither the stimulus nor the inviting occasion.

Surely, therefore, in view of these facts, and these reasons for the facts, revivals are not to be regarded with suspicion and as experiences to be avoided, nor even as "gracious irregularities," but as a normal and blessed means of growth and ingathering. Their evils, excesses, questionable methods should be determinedly opposed and repressed, but revivals themselves should be sought and welcomed as of God.

IV. EVILS TO BE AVOIDED IN CONNECTION WITH REVIVALS.

(1) *The recognition of any particular ministers or class of ministers as revivalists.* There is no such distinctive class known to the New Testament. It is making an invidious and reprehensible comparison. It is giving countenance among the people to the idea that certain ministers on wheels have a kind of monopoly of the Holy Spirt, and can command His services on call. It is disturbing and dishonoring to the pastorate. *Every pastor* should be a revivalist, should always aim to be in a revived state, should preach revival sermons, use revival methods and expect revival results.

(2) *The notion that is implied in the phrase "getting*

up a revival," as if revivals were a mere matter of human device and machinery. This notion looks too much to man's agency. It magnifies the creature. It is of the earth earthy. Revivals are never gotten up. They are brought down. They are not subject to order. They are born of God.

(3) *The notion that any excitement is pernicious, and is, therefore, to be studiously repressed.* Many a minister has failed of the precious fruits of revival because of having spread over every meeting a great blanket of carefulness. We Presbyterians, as a class, are too much afraid of the emotions. We seem to be in constant dread of the contagion of a little Methodist enthusiasm.

Now, there is an excitement that is wholly or chiefly animal. It is not grounded in rational conviction. It is fostered by rubbing of hands, tones of voice, chorus of song, affecting stories, mere hortatory appeals and social bodily contact. It can be worked up any day in a crowd by a skillful leader. Such excitement is indeed a sore evil in connection with any service of God, and every pastor ought to set his face like a flint against it.

But because excitement like this is bad, *all* excitement is not bad. God's truth is for the mind. The mind is the rational road to the heart. If the *truth* excite, the excitement is based on rational grounds, and is good and only good. To deprecate this is to

deprecate just those effects of divine truth which it should and must produce, where it has anything like its appropriate power. For a minister to report concerning a revival of religion in his church that it was all very quiet and unattended by any excitement is either to belie the facts, or to make out the work most shallow and superficial, touching only the merest surface of human nature.

A Christian in the midst of revival work, realizing the condition of the ungodly, their peril, guilt, opportunity and possibilities of life and death, ought to be stirred with the profoundest feeling.

A sinner, under conviction of sin, asking what he must do to be saved, and settling the momentous question by at least believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, ought to be deeply excited. If he be not, it is because he has seen precious little, either of his sin or his Lord.

A man who will be stirred and thrilled over his own rescue from some impending physicial danger, and yet will coolly talk about having had no feeling in being rescued from death and hell, betrays his utter misapprehension of the stupendous fact, and suggests the suspicion that the fact is as wanting in his case as the feeling.

When those three thousand at Pentecost were convicted and pricked in their heart, and were led to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

is it to be supposed they had no excitement? And when the Philippian jailer sprang in and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" was he considering and settling the great question with that exceeding quietness that we hear so often commended? And when that mighty work of grace was going on at Ephesus, and fear fell on all, and the name of Jesus was magnified, and many dealers in magic brought their books together and burned them before all men, the price of which was fifty thousand pieces of silver, was it all so serene and still that scarcely a ripple stirred the surface of Ephesian life, or was the whole city ablaze with excitement and everybody talking about the wondrous work? Don't be afraid of any excitement born of the truth. Be afraid rather of the conversion that has been unattended by feeling. President Edwards, in giving some account of the effect of the great awakening of 1735, says: "Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain be forevermore possessed of that happy distemper. If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be all seized with this benign, meek, benificient, beatifical, glorious distraction."

(4) *The notion that any particular method or machinery is essential to revival.* Because certain methods

or instrumentalities have been used successfully, there is a tendency in human nature to lean on them and to give them vital place in plan and thought, and to think that revival can be had by no other road. There is just one agent absolutely indispensable to revival—God's Spirit. There is just one instrument absolutely indispensable to revival—God's truth, the preaching Christ. All else, absolutely all, is minor, secondary, variable, incidental, dispensable. Special appointments, varied instruments, different methods may be good. Wisdom will suggest choice of these to suit circumstances. But all trust for effectiveness must be in God's Spirit and truth alone.

(5) *The notion that anybody who is willing to work is fit for work in time of revival.* Indiscriminate service, whether in the pulpit, the lecture room, the inquiry meeting or the parish, is one of the worst evils connected with revival work. Let the pastor be perfectly sure of his substitute, both as to practical wisdom and present spiritual interest, before he allow that substitute to take his place either in preaching, or social religious service, or personal counsel.

V. THE CONDITIONS ESSENTIAL TO REVIVAL.

Here they are in the very words of God Himself: *If my people which are called by my name shall hum-*

ble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.—2 Chron., vii, 14.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me; cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.—Ps. li, 10–13.

VI. WORK PREPARATORY TO REVIVAL.

The stricter definition given to revival, as applicable only to the church, and the Scriptural conditions just named, point clearly to the antecedent steps to be taken in every case before any mighty work of grace may be expected. "If *my people* who are called *by my name* shall humble themselves," etc.

(1.) the pastor must *begin with his own heart.* A fire in the pulpit is the best means of kindling a fire in the pews. The pastor should not *talk* about revival, but *be revived.* Let him expect nothing from his people that is not first in his own heart. He should not bemoan deadness in the church before the congregation until he has in the closet bemoaned deadness in himself before God and his own

want of love to Christ. No searching and rebuking sermons to his flock will avail much, if he has not already felt the rebuke of them as the truth has searched his own soul.

(2.) Thus humbled, penitent, burdened, yearning for the presence and power of Christ, let the pastor lay his heart open to the elders or deacons, or whoever are his constituted spiritual counselors. They are ordained with him to the care and watch of the church, and his natural helpers in every good work.

(3.) The pastor should now aim at great searchings of heart with his people Sabbath after Sabbath, preaching to the church, *to the church*, TO THE CHURCH, blow on blow. Let this be followed up in the closer contact of the prayer-meetings. Compel Christians, for the time being to *forget the impenitent* in their great concern about their own condition before God as unfaithful to Christ in love and service.

The tendency is to turn at once to the impenitent. The impression prevails that God is not working if conversions are not taking place. The moment some Christians begin to pray for a work of God, they lose all sight and thought of the church in a great zeal for converts. Let the pastor correct this habit; get his people to heart-searching and penitence and confession and humbling of soul

before God, and have them understand that this is more acceptable to God, and more likely to secure his large blessing than a sudden zeal for the impenitent, and that they are in no condition to do the ungodly much service until they have humbled themselves before God.

(4) As soon as the pastor finds a heart kindled with any unusual emotion, or bowed with any unwonted sense of sin, or yearning with any unwonted desire for God's glory, let him get alongside that heart, lay it and his own together, and in the fellowship of that common sense of sin and yearning for a blessing, let them keep company at the altar of prayer.

(5) Find a *second* or *third* also kindled. Have with these a special weekly appointment of half an hour for communion and prayer, pleading God's special promises and bearing special cases before God.

(6) Arrange a half hour for concert of prayer among the mothers in Israel, the devout and godly women, who will agree quietly to observe a certain half hour or quarter of an hour of the day together, or better perhaps alone, for prayer for the outpouring of God's Spirit.

(7) Call the Sunday school teachers together, and have them interested in the same way for their scholars. Thus get circles of prayer started,

different interests enlisted, many "twos" or "threes" agreed as touching one thing.

(8) Increase appointments for public meetings *only as there is demand* for them. Have the interest compel the meetings, and do not appoint extra meetings to get up interest.

(9) With a prepared church the pastor may turn to the impenitent, and pour the hottest shot into their ranks, preaching the truths most directly adapted to bring them to Christ with the fullest assurance that the conditions are now present for a great awakening and multiplied victories.

I do not say that a pastor is to wait for this before he makes appeal to the ungodly. I do not say that souls will not be given him, though he have no such aroused and humbled and praying church behind him. But I do say that no large numbers will ordinarily be born to God in connection with a church, nine-tenths of whose members are asleep or drowned in worldliness.

VII. WORK COINCIDENT WITH REVIVAL.

PREACHING.

So far as possible it should be by the pastor, and almost exclusively to the impenitent.

The preaching should be by the pastor, because (1) no one knows the need so well as he. No one can, therefore, so well adapt the truth to the special

circumstances of individuals; (2) he can thus work on a plan, have truths in succession, supply what he knows to be lacking look toward a definite and fixed result; (3) it will associate the pastor in the minds of the people with the work of rescue, and the souls born to God under his preaching will come to look upon him as their spiritual father, and thus will be formed one of the tenderest, dearest, most sacred relationships on earth, binding in bonds of sweet affection for all time, and probably for all eternity. How can a pastor throw all this away by sending for a traveling evangelist on every occasion of special effort or special interest in his parish? Evangelists are chiefly for waste and destitute places; not for fully organized churches with officers and pastors.*

The preaching should be to the impenitent, because this is the time to strike. The church have had instruction and upbuilding all the year. They are ready for action. *Rescue* work is now to be absorbing.

VISITATION.

Now is the time for frequent personal interviews, eye to eye, palm to palm, heart to heart. The

*This is said in full recognition of the inestimable service that has been rendered to the organized churches, and the unquestionable seal of God that has been had by such men as Whitefield, Nettleton, Finney and others. But these are the exceptions and not the rule. It still remains true that the natural, normal and Scriptural agencies for doing the rescue work and structural work in the local church are the Scripturally constituted officers and members of that church.

pastor should have a great deal to say "between four eyes." Every day the winner of souls should be out among the people, seeking them from house to house.

But personal interviews will be convenienced and promoted often by their being invited. And so a daily hour at the study should be appointed for them.

USE OF BOOKS AND TRACTS.

Books should be very brief and very pointed. There are very few, however, fitted for revival work. An extended reading is not what a sinner needs who is asking the question, What must I do to be saved? Tracts are far better than books, because commonly more brief, direct, pungent. But it should be known *exactly what condition each tract is adapted to meet.* There are tracts suited precisely to some need, but likely to do a deal of harm if furnished for every need. Better no printed page at all than its indiscriminate use.

THE INQUIRY MEETING.

Work here is often most delicate and difficult, and requires judgment and tact

A word or two at this point about the inquiry meeting in general before consideration of the work in said meeting at a season of special revival.

The very proclamation of the Gospel involves and necessitates an inquiry meeting, or something that

answers to it. Possibly it were well to change the name in view of existing prejudice against this agency because of its abuses, but the thing—i. e., some kind of opportunity to inquire further concerning truth already heard and felt—is vital to any high and wide success.

The inquiry meeting is *drawing the net* after it has been cast by the sermon. It should be a permanent feature of church work, and *held immediately after every public preaching service the whole round year.*

Reasons. (1) At any service there may be a soul reached and moved by the truth.

(2) Death may intervene before a later appointment can be met.

(3) Delay will give the world, the flesh and the devil time to dissipate impressions.

(4) Under the immediate influence of the truth inquirers will be most likely to improve the opportunity offered for personal conversation.

(5) When the impression is the freshest, further work will be the easiest. The Spirt of God is already there, and this is recognizing and following His lead.

(6) The permanent appointment takes away the appearance of *spasmodic* effort, and gives the impression that the church of God is always expecting results.

(7) It enables the pastor to discover the earliest

"sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees." If there be any special moving of God's spirit it will at once be manifested in attendance at this permanent appointment. I have known good men startled at the sudden discovery of wide spiritual interest in their congregations, they having preached in ignorance of it for weeks, and even months.

I can conceive of no possible opposing considerations to outweigh these seven good reasons for furnishing an opportunity of personal religious conversation with the pastor to any who might wish it on any Sabbath Day.

Those invited to this appointment should be made distinctly to understand that their attendance is *not a profession of religion, nor a commitment to Christ, nor an acknowledgment of deep feeling, nor even the avowal of a determination to seek Christ, but simply the expression of a desire for personal conversation on the subject of personal religion.* The way to this meeting has often been barred by making the going there involve too much. It should be understood to involve nothing but a willingness to hear farther of the matter, concerning which something has already been heard.

THE CONDUCT OF AN INQUIRY MEETING AT A SEASON OF SPECIAL INTEREST.

(*a*) It should be in the hands of the pastor always. For, first, the truth from his lips has made

the impression; it would seem better that the truth from his lips should deepen the impression. Who so well fitted as he to press still further his own thought? Secondly, the inquirer will commonly prefer conversation with the pastor to any other.

(*b*) If the inquirers are numerous the pastor should have assistance in the meeting. But the persons to assist should be selected by the pas or and their consent to act secured, and the meeting should never be thrown open to all sorts of volunteers. Superficial and officious persons may do incalculable harm in such a place.

The pastor should fearlessly go outside his church officers for persons in his judgment best fitted, both by *experience* and *present spiritual interest* for this work if they are not to be found amongst his official helpers. Fitness alone, not office, has any claim here.

Young converts, whose experience is unquestionable, and whose clear, intelligent views the pastor is sure of, who are fresh from the world and full of the joy of their new espousals, certainly may be of service in pointing others to Christ. It would seem that those would be able to make the way plain to others who had just been over the road themselves.

Yet the greatest prudence is needed here. Young converts know little of the varied methods of the Spirit's operations. They are apt to magnify unduly the particular experience through which they have

passed, and to emphasize therefore that which is incidental and variant in connection with the great change, rather than that which is fundamental and constant. Every inquirer should be made to understand that no particular experience is necessarily to be reproduced in his case.

(*c*) No time should be taken for general exercises, whether singing, Scripture-reading, or address. The long range has been had in the more public service. This is the place for close personal encounter, for face-to-face individual work with each inquirer.

(*d*) In this work of personal conversation the aim should be, first, *to find out the exact posture of the inquirer's mind.* Diagnosis before prescription. The pastor or Christian teacher *should turn inquirer*, and ascertain how the person with whom he is conversing is viewing the truth, what the trouble is, the point of difficulty, and the direction of the Spirit's striving.

Secondly, *to pour in at that very point the truth of God,* making much use of the very words of the Scripture. Objections should be met by Scripture, difficulties removed by Scripture, doubts dissipated by Scripture.

Thirdly, to press to an immediate decision—an instant surrender. Whatever the circumstances of the sinner, no counsel can be right that does not mean *now.*

Cautions: 1. Avoid *protracted* conversation. A few direct words straight to the conscience and heart, driven home and clinched by some passage of Scripture, after the situation of the inquirer is once ascertained, are far better than a multitude of words, however good.

2. Avoid *successive* conversation by different individuals with the same inquirer. These will almost inevitably be confusing and diverting. A profound impression made by one Christian may be wholly dissipated by the talk of another who does not know what has already been done.

3. Avoid *controversy*. Nothing will so soon ease a sinner of trouble on account of his sin, as a good battle over some controverted point in theology. His presence in the inquiry meeting implies that he feels himself a sinner. The Christian is to meet his difficulties there and nowhere else.

(*e*) In the case of each inquirer the conversation *should be followed by prayer*, and participation in prayer, *by the inquirer personally and audibly*, should by all means be secured if possible, though it be only with half a dozen words, such as "God be merciful to me a sinner;" "Lord save or I perish," or, better still as involving a personal commitment, "Here and now, O Lord, just as I am I give myself to thee forever." It is some such conscious, solemn act of commitment and surrender as this that

involves faith and brings it to prominence in the sinner's own mind.

CLASSES OF SINNERS.

The two all comprehensive classes are *converted* sinners and *unconverted* sinners. An inquirer *may be* in the former class. Diagnosis should discover the exact situation.

For the purposes of the inquiry meeting the *unconverted* need only be classified as without conviction of sin, and under conviction of sin.

(*a*) *The unconvicted.* Say what we may about the universal conscience and the universal consciousness, there is a difference amongst men that we must recognize and act upon if we would have any success in winning souls. There are men at ease concerning themselves, indifferent as to God's claims, untroubled on account of sin. They have no care and no thought about their souls. They have no sense of personal sin againt God and deserving punishment. They are unconvicted.

(*b*) *The convicted.* These have come to see their sin in some measure. By some truth or providence of God they have been led in greater or less degree to feel their guilt, and to think about the way of getting rid of it. The feeling may be very slight, stirring only the surface; or very deep, stirring the whole soul. It may only give a shade of seriousness to the look or heart, or it may fill

with the profoundest anxiety. In either case and in any such case they are *convicted of sin*—of sin as against God and as deserving punishment. Blessed is the pastor who has gotten a soul in such a case. It is the supreme moment in a sinner's life when he is in a posture willingly and thoughtfully to consider the question, What must I do to be saved?

DEALING WITH THE UNCONVICTED.

The want of conviction is usually conditioned in one of three things—*Indifference, Procrastination*, or *Self-Righteousness*. Find out which, and strike the blows there. If by any possibility the person's thought as to himself and God can be gotten, then to show its folly and sin is a straight road.

DEALING WITH THE CONVICTED.

The question to be answered is only one. What such a soul needs to know is, what he must do to be saved. Not what he must do to have more conviction, or more feeling or more faith or anything else.

(*a*) That advice is wrong which tells a sinner to do anything which he *can do and still be unsaved.*

Hence that is *bad* advice.

1. Which simply sets a man to the process of reformation. Reformation is not regeneration.

2. Which merely counsels attendance on religious meetings. The Bible nowhere sends an inquirer to religious meeting.

3. Which consists only in telling the inquirer to pray and read his Bible. He may have been doing just this for days and weeks with no result.

4. Which urges *public confession of Christ and union with the church.* He must *find* Christ before confessing Him. And union with the church ought never to be thought of or suggested until the sinner is by faith *united to Christ.*

5. Which contents the sinner with the thought that if he desire to be a Christian he *need only keep on in his search and seeking.* His "keeping on" is rebellion so long as he does not surrender and believe.

6. Which sets a sinner merely to *praying for a new heart.* This is no Bible taught prayer, and God will never give a man a new heart until the old heart is given to Him.

7. Which urges the sinner *to try to repent.* God's word says, "*Repent.*"

8. Which *compromises* with the sinner; *e.g.*—the question is asked, Don't you think one can be a Christian and dance? Probe that questioner, and the likelihood is he will be found making terms with God just at that point. If so however innocent the dance or any other thing may be in itself, he who makes a point with God about it must have for answer to the above question, "Yes, but *you* can't."

9. Which tells an inquirer to do anything whatever when he comes expecting to do something to *merit* salvation, or to *fit himself* for it. Then he is to be told that nothing is to be done. "Doing," in that mood, "is a deadly thing." "It is finished" is the word of Jesus that should knock the foundation out from under all such hope.

(*b*) That advice is right which tells a sinner to do *just what in his immediate case needs to be done to carry his heart in instant surrender and trust in Christ.* This will be found to be very different in different cases. To tell one who comes asking what he must do to be saved, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, may not meet his need at all. That may not be the thing he most needs to know and do. Believe he must, beyond all question, before he can be saved. Faith is first in the order of the graces, the hinge that turns the whole soul about, without which no man can please God. But to tell an inquirer to believe, *may not touch the secret of the difficulty* WITH HIM. For unbelief may not be his specific trouble; may not be the point of the Spirit's striving.

Paul told the Philippian jailor *to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*, but Peter told the Jews at Pentecost in answer to the same question *to repent*, and Jesus told the young man of the Gospel to *go and sell all that he had and give it to the poor*, and Joshua and Elijah and Jesus summoned to

decision—bade man *make choice.* Each struck a blow at the immediate difficulty. The direction in each case, if followed, would carry the whole heart. Each told the inquirer to do just what in each particular case was the specific thing to be done. Yet in one case it was "believe," in another "repent," in another "surrender," in another "choose." Hence, if right advice is to be given the counselor *must know the case.* Hence the importance of the point previously made—*diagnosis before prescription.*

VIII. WORK SUBSEQUENT TO REVIVAL.

This brings us to the best means of husbanding the fruits of revivals.

1. *Converts should be enrolled as members of the church* upon satisfactory evidence of their conversion. When they show that they are of Christ's flock, they have a right in the fold.

2. *Converts should be taught specially and systematically in Christian doctrine.* Express provision of some kind should be made for this, that these new disciples may be early rooted and grounded in the faith.

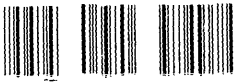
3. *Converts should be put immediately at some active service.* Early activity of brain and heart and hands and tongue in Christian directions will make future wall-flowers, and dumb Lazaruses and drones

in the church an impossibility. Only let the activity be suited to the case, both in kind and degree, and provocative of neither pride nor depression.

4. *Converts should be given congenial association.* Some of them have been revolutionized not only in their inner life, but *in all outward association.* They must be surrounded by something that shall take the place of old companionship.

5. The new disciples should be made to understand *that their type of piety must be better than that they find in the church.* How is the church ever to grow beautiful for situation, and to have her robes spotless and befitting the bride of Christ, if the coming Christians take no higher plane of Christian living than those who have preceded them?

6. The whole church must be made familiar with the idea that *training* young disciples is just as important as *securing* them; and that this duty and privilege are at the door of every church member receiving these young converts to communion.


11 343 469

BV
3799
.9
.J01

69639
Johnson
Revivals Their Place
& Their Power

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
11 343 469